

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - September 07, 2009

The Pastor's Pen

Everybody likes to hear positive comments. All of us like to be affirmed. Affirmation just helps our mood and our outlook.

I've come to be a fan of Dr. Donald Haynes. Dr. Haynes writes a column for each issue of the "The United Methodist Review." Those of you who get "The Review" may have read some of his columns. Dr. Haynes is a retired seminary professor, and I enjoy hearing his insights on things. In one of his recent columns he reported that a recent Gallup poll had disclosed that the United Methodist Church is the most trusted denomination in the United States. That's a positive, and that ought to make us feel good about ourselves.

In that same vein I'd like for us to think positively about our church here at First UMC. Sometimes we get our eyes focused on things that we think need to be changed or things that could use some improving, and we turn toward the negative. I've heard some comments here and there from some of us that betray a bit more negative attitude toward our church than I would like to hear. Now the difficulty with that is not that I think I should not hear anything negative. My difficulty is that if we don't take great care, the negative can envelope us before we know what's happening.

I suppose all of us at one time or another is subject to a good case of the negatives, but the problem with giving in to the negative is that the negative has a way of pulling us in. The negative can be like quicksand. Once you get in it, it's difficult to extract yourself from it. It keeps pulling you in deeper and deeper.

I don't want the negatives to pull us in. A negative attitude in a church is not a first-time-worshiper-friendly kind of attitude. We need to be positive about who we are and present an air of hopefulness to others. That's what the church is all about. The church ought to be the most hopeful place in all the world.

Instead of focusing almost solely on things about our church that we think could use some improving, I'd like to suggest that we think from time to time about all that is good about our church. Lawrenceburg First UMC is one of the most grace-filled churches I've ever had the pleasure of serving. I'll never forget what my dad said about this church in the only visit he got to make here. He said after the worship, "That's a good church," and my dad didn't pass out compliments all that freely.

We are a church that has developed some wonderful ministries over the last three years in a variety of areas, and we are a church that has strengthened already existing ministries. We have a church that is filled with a lot of good people committed to the Lord, and we have a lot of talented people in our church. We are a church that doesn't quit. We are a church that has one of the best, if not the best, choir in this area. We are a very friendly church, and as a Methodist Church we don't start with what's wrong with you. We start with the goodness of God and the redemptive nature of that goodness for each of us. There are a host of good things about our church. We are a church that has a lot to offer. All we have to do is look around. Positive things are here.

So have we arrived yet? No. Do we not have anything we need to improve? No, that's not the case either. Are we doing everything God would have us do? No, I don't think so. There are areas in our church life that we need to strengthen, but simply because we have these things doesn't mean we need to turn toward the negative in our thinking. Let's remain positive about who we are and what we are doing as the church. After all, we are the people of God. We are the body of Christ. We are among the being-saved-by-grace. We belong to Christ.

Let me once again quote the Apostle Paul. "Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). Let us take care not to give in to the negative. If we do, it will pull us into a place we don't want to be. Let us keep a positive outlook as we continue to be laborers in the Lord's vineyard. Just something to think about.

Until next time,
Bro. Jim

PULASKI DISTRICT TRAINING EVENT

The Pulaski District will have a training event on Sunday, September 20, 2009 from 2:00

- 4:30 p.m. at Coleman Memorial UMC (322 North Military Ave.). Workshops include **PPRC Committees** (led by D.S. Jim Beaty for all local church and charge committees); **Children's Coordinators** (led by Patty Smith); **Youth Leaders** (led by Brad Fiscus); **Finance & Risk Management** (led by Jim Allen for Church/Charge Treasurers, Finance Committees and Boards of Trustees).

LAY LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

The Lay Leadership Committee will meet on Sunday, September 13, at 4:00 p.m. Members of the Lay Leadership committee are: DeAnna Saliba, Leslie Hunt, Keri McMahan, Linda Newton, Judy Benson, Beth Benson, Ray Price, Chris Thigpen and John Johnstone.

STAFF-PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING

The Staff-Parish Committee will meet on Monday, September 14, at 6:00 p.m. Members of the Staff-Parish Committee are: Bobby Belew-Chairperson, Virgil Crowder, Gayle Wright, Marc Lerner, Jansen Holt, Judy Brewer, Brenda Benson, Gracie Henson, Tom Benson, Jerry Moore (Lay Leader) and Judy Benson (Lay Member-AC).

UMW DATES TO REMEMBER

October 10

- TN Conference Annual Meeting "Who's at Your Table?"
Shelbyville FUMC at 9:30 a.m.; Register by September 30. Cost is \$15.00; forms are in the church office. Everyone is asked to wear orange and bring a love offering for *Bethlehem Centers of Nashville. The church van will leave the CLC at 7:30 a.m.
- ***Bethlehem Centers of Nashville needs our help!** Christy Cookies has a contest going on that will provide \$10,000 to a charity with the highest number of votes, and \$5,000 to three other runners up. All that is required to vote for Bethlehem Center of Nashville is to log onto www.christiecookies.com and follow the directions about how to vote. No purchase is required and only one vote can be submitted per email address.

****Please start bringing in your Campbell's soup labels and the box top for education labels; these will be taken to the Fall meeting.**

November 14

- Autumn Harvest - 8:00 a.m. until 12 noon
- Bake Sale
- Breakfast
- Carry-Outs (Stew, Chili, Chicken & Dumplings, Chicken Salad, Pimento Cheese)

****Please start bringing in pint and quart jars for the Autumn Harvest**

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPERS

On Wednesday night, September 16th, we will resume the Wednesday night suppers. Serving will be from 5:30 - 6:15 p.m. (please note time change). The cost will remain the same: \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children/youth. The menu for September 16th is as follows: BBQ chicken, Slaw, Baked beans, Rolls, Pecan cobbler and a drink. The Wesley class will be helping set-up, serve and clean up. Please look for each weeks' menu/reservation in your Sunday bulletin.

HAND BELL NEWS

Children's Bells will begin September 16th, from 5:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Youth Bells will begin September 20th, from 5:15 - 6:00 p.m.

Adult Bells will begin September 20th, from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

There will be a Children's Ministry (ages K-6th grade) starting up on Wednesday, September 16, from 6:15 - 7:30 p.m. Jane Jennings will be leading this group. The

group will meet in the Craft Room in the CLC.

CHRISTIANS CONNECT

Christians Connect will meet next Sunday, following the 8:15 a.m. service in the Friends & Fellowship classroom. This month's gathering will be hosted by the **Aldersgate class**.

ACTION PLAN OUTLINE

For persons who may not have been able to attend the Sunday night meeting two weeks ago when the Action Plan was presented, an outline of the plan can be obtained at the church office. Just see Terri.

JERRY THOMAS CLASS BREAKFAST - SEPTEMBER 19

The Jerry Thomas Class will have a breakfast on Saturday, September 19th, at 8:00 a.m., at the Square Forty Restaurant. All members and spouses, former members and spouses and spouses of former members are invited to attend.

CHARGE CONFERENCE PREPARATION

Our Charge Conference this year is on Sunday, November 8th at 6:00 p.m. The following Committee Chairpersons will need to complete a report form:

Finance Committee - Cliff Philpot

Trustees - Dean Erwin

Staff-Parish Relations - Bobby Belew

Parsonage inspection Form - Gracie Henson & Brenda Benson

Celebration of Missions - Jerry Gibbs

Martin Methodist Representative - Martha Jo Gibbs

Lay Speaker Form (Lay Speakers forms are available at the church office)

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

On Thursday, September 17th, there will be a meeting to organize a Pulaski District Volunteers in Mission (VIM) Team for local missions work. This district team is not intended to take the place of existing church VIM teams on projects such as homes and churches within the bounds of the Pulaski District. There are persons (lay and clergy) who have wanted to do VIM type work locally but have not been able to form their own teams. This will give them an opportunity to be a part of a team. The motto of VIM is "Christian Love in Action." We envision persons from many different churches within the district sharing their talents and resources in order to work together to reflect God's love to others.

We already have two projects tentatively scheduled. The first is making the district office accessible to those with disabilities (ramp and restaurant). The second is building a covered walkway and dividing a building into Sunday school rooms at one of our UMC churches. You do not have to be a skilled craftsman to be a part of the team. We need people with various 'talents' which could include running a shop vac and clean-up.

If you want to find out more, please join us at Antioch UMC in Leoma on Thursday, September 17, at 7:00 p.m. For directions or more information, contact Earl Davis (pastor of Antioch UMC) at 931-852-4658 or brotherearl@lorettotel.net.

LAY SPEAKING CLASSES - SATURDAY/SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 26-27

There are still available spaces for the Lay Speaking classes (Basic and Advanced) to be held at East End in Savannah, on Saturday/Sunday, September 26-27. Interested parties may register online at pulaskilayspeak.com or via phone/voicemail to Elizabeth Eubanks at ***** or by faxing registration to (931) 269-4085 or email to Pulaskilayspeak@Aol.com. The church office also has registration forms for those who wish to participate.

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson

Freddie Mae Jackson

Oscar and Agnes McCarter

